

ISSUE #89: CROSSFORCE, ORPHANED LAND, BEHOLD THE KINGDOM, + 20 REVIEWS

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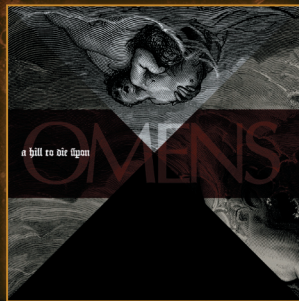
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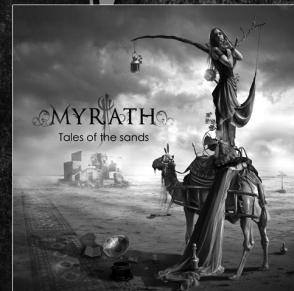
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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



BEHOLD THE KINGDOM Sicking the dogs of metal...

By Mark Blair Glunt

"Behold the Kingdom of the dead that rise again!" a proclamation of the dead in Christ rising in reference of God's Kingdom. This being the death core anthem to Behold the Kingdom's final song "The Valley of Elah" from their debut release. It kind of sums up who they are as a band, the reason they perform. It is rare in this day to find a band that really has their chops up and are very ministry oriented. Behold the Kingdom is one of those.

This Ohio based quintet features Riley Snyder and Derrik Young on guitars, Mark Baker on bass and Joe Bellmer on vocals. Founding member and drummer Cliff DeWeese, laid down the drum track for the new recording on Rottweiler Records. He has recently left the band. The new collection *The Eyes of the Wicked Will Fail* was released in August of this year presenting ten brutal songs inspired by bands like early Impending Doom, Black Dahlia Murder, Job for a Cowboy & Sleeping Giant.

Behold the Kingdom started in 2007, when Cliff and Riley began taking their faith seriously. They left secular bands intent on playing for the Father. The guys teamed up with two others and Arelim was formed. A year later Mark and Derrik replaced those members and they changed their name to Behold the Kingdom. They went through a couple vocalists until Joe finished up the current line up in early 2010. Derrik says the name describes what they want to do, "Like the Kingdom of God ... our goal is to bring Jesus everywhere we go, to bring heaven wherever we go."

It was last spring when Behold the Kingdom was asked to play a show with Grave Robber at the Vineyard Café in Bellefontaine, OH. At that time Grave Robber's lead singer, Shawn Browning had just launched his new label Rottweiler Records. He was very impressed by their live show. He told the band it was obvious they were very serious about ministry and he appreciated their level professionalism. It was just what he was looking for. A few weeks later after prayerful consideration, contracts were signed and Behold the Kingdom became the second official signed band to Rottweiler.

News bullets

HM Magazine has officially gone out-of-print, pointing to its "digi-editions" (online and app versions) as the future of the publication. Plans are for a free-to-all Special Christmas Edition (December 2011) issue to give people an all-access look at the publication, followed by monthly digi-editions starting in January. Digital subscriptions will start off at the super low price of \$6 for a year, which will eventually go up to \$12 for 12 monthly issues. Individual copies will sell for \$1.99 each.

Lance King is releasing a new album, *A Moment In Chiro's*. Known for his powerful voice in previous bands (Pyramaze, Balance of Power), this one is right up there with quality metal with equal parts prog-metal, power metal and melodic metal.

The DJ known as Clutch recently had **Megadeth's Dave Mustaine** on his show to discuss where the band is at following the release of *TH1RT3N*. You can find a link at the NEWS tab at hmmag.com

The Great Commission has made a video for the song "Weight of the World" from its *Heavy Worship* album, as well as touring with A Bullet for Pretty Boy and The Air I Breathe.

Demon Hunter and **The Showdown's** fabulous drummer, **Yogi Watts**, is sitting on the drumstool for hardcore legends Throwdown on its *Brawloween Tour*.

P.O.D. has signed a multi-album deal with Razor & Tie. A new album is slated for 2012. The band has already tapped Howard Benson for production duties. "We are really excited to be starting a new chapter of our career with Razor & Tie. We just can't wait to put out the new album and show everyone what we've worked so hard on," adds P.O.D. vocalist **Sonny Sandoval**. "P.O.D. is a relevant, legendary, iconic band and we are very excited that they have decided to work with us," commented Razor & Tie Co-Owners Cliff Chenfeld and Craig Balsam. "We have made a real commitment to releasing quality music from the best rock bands and signing P.O.D. is a serious statement about how serious and passionate we are."

The Athens, Georgia-based melodic metal band **THEOCRACY** will release their new album *As The World Bleeds* on November 25th in Europe through Ulterium Records and on November 21st in North America through Nightmare Records. The album will also be released as a double gatefold vinyl edition, strictly limited to 500 copies worldwide. Track listing: 01. I AM; 02. The Master Storyteller; 03. Nailed; 04. Hide in the Fairytale; 05. The Gift of Music; 06. 30 Pieces of Silver; 07. Drown; 08. Altar to the Unknown God; 09. Light of the World; 10. As the World Bleeds. Check out an album teaser at YouTube: <http://youtu.be/lRqVm0eLt68>

Lust Control is writing new tunes. The band plans on recording in early 2012 for an EP. Look for their heaviest song yet, "Finger," to appear on this (CD/vinyl!) release.

NEW MUSIC Spotlight:



Behold The Kingdom | cont'd:

The band agrees the new record is brutal and quite graphic. But they assure us that even the most graphic of lyrics come straight from the Bible. The title, The Eyes of the Wicked will Fail, comes from the book of Job.

Behold the Kingdom's attitude and influence on the local scene reminds us of Stryper in their early years. They impress with their musical ability, their stage presence and they speak boldly of Christ. They have lots of respect from non-Christian and Christian bands and fans alike. For them it is always about ministry, being a light to a broken world, then almost equally important is to play a brutal tight show with lots of stage presence. They will rock your face off, then preach the word; no matter where they are playing – whether bar or Christian club. And people still love them. That could be because all the guys are very relational and easy to like. One minute they are having a light saber duel with a fan, the next they are praying with or encouraging someone who is struggling.

Their live shows are what must be seen. These guys are true entertainers. They are constantly on the move, doing scream and response with some of their anthems, songs loaded with breakdowns and change ups. Mixed with both clean vocals and low growls only deathcore fans appreciate. Mark Baker adds, "And lots of hair whips!" They know how to have fun, yet when it's time to be serious they lay it down dark and heavy. If they come anywhere close to you, do yourself a huge favor and go.

NEW FROM LANCE KING

A MOMENT IN CHIROS



ethereal progressive
power metal from
the former voice of
pyramaze, balance of
power, for fans of
redemption, dream
theater and symphony x
with a nod at greats led
zeppelin

Lance has chosen "Human Trafficking" (sex slavery), one of the fastest growing criminal activities worldwide as the charitable cause he would like to champion, profits from this album will go to efforts to abolish this slave trade worldwide through an organization called "NOT FOR SALE"!

Distributed by Sony/ RED

Release Date: 11/11/11
www.NightmareRecords.com





CROSSFORCE | Where are they now?

BY KEVEN CROTHERS

WHEN THE NAMES OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CHRISTIAN METAL ACTS ARE DISCUSSED IT IS WITH MUCH REGRET THAT THE NAME **CROSSFORCE DOESN'T GET MENTIONED. YOU YOURSELF MIGHT BE THINKING, "WHO? I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THEM." THAT REALLY IS TOO BAD BECAUSE THERE ARE ONLY A HANDFUL OF ARTISTS WHO WROTE SONGS THAT HAVE A TIMELESS APPEAL – MELODIES AND LYRICS THAT HAVE DEPTH AND APPEAL BEYOND THEIR ORIGINAL CONCEPTION, WHICH IS CALLED STAYING POWER. IT WAS TRAGIC THAT CROSSFORCE WERE NEVER SIGNED TO ONE OF THE MAJOR CHRISTIAN LABELS CONSIDERING THE AMOUNT OF TRIPE THAT WAS RELEASED IN THE 1980'S.**

In late 2009 a bug was placed in the ear of Roxx Productions owner Bill Bafford about releasing the demo material that Crossforce had accumulated, much of it never before heard. He liked the idea but with other artists already in the pipeline, Crossforce would have to wait. Well, that waiting finally came to fruition with the 2011 release, *Crossforce – Rockin Til The Final Day*. This long awaited release contained their original six song demo that was made available in early 1987. However, unknown to many, there was a seven song "live in the studio" recording made for Jimmy Kempner of Frontline Records. These additional seven songs make up the bulk of this release.

With this release it was time to speak again with lead guitarist, and one of Crossforce's founding members, Phil Castillo. Over the course of our conversation we covered a lot of ground, but as we discussed how Phil connected with lead vocalist Tony Crider, he had a gleam in his eye as he shared, "I was living in San Jose and attending college when I got a call from Tony Crider who was forming a new band after leaving Golgotha. Tony had heard word on the street about me when I was in a band called Revelation. I'd heard and seen Golgotha a couple times but I never personally met him. He asked if I'd come down and jam with he and Jeff Hudson. They had some tunes put together and were playing to a drum machine. I brought my guitar and a bozo little practice amp and it clicked. I loved their boldness in the faith too."

It was an amazing time in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1987, thrash had exploded but so had glam and blues based hard rock. Crossforce made their mark as well and Phil had quite a bit of recollection in this regard. "It was a very exciting time. The music scene in the Bay Area was so vibrant. Tons of cool Christian Bands and secular acts like Forbidden Evil, Testament, Metallica, etc., were making their mark too and following in the great tradition of other great local acts since the 1960's like Jefferson Airplane, Doobie Bros, Santana, Journey, Montrose, just to name a few." Thoughtfully he continued, "Metallica practiced in the same rehearsal spot as Crossforce and it was sad to see them come back right after Cliff Burton died. They were pretty bummed. Incidentally, they were the quietest band in there which I found interesting. They practiced at such a low volume while Crossforce was shaking the walls. Metallica were the smart ones since they probably kept their hearing.

Believer and Valor were great bands and great brothers in the Lord. I remember the first time I saw Soldier. That was awesome. Those guys were so good and punchy. Mark (Soldier's bass player) was my fashion guru. I always dressed like a dork and Mark had an eye for fashion and would get me fixed up. Jimmy would smoke on the vocals and Rick Martinez would shred. I had nice gear but not much of it cuz I was always broke. Rick had a good job and thus had rows of guitars and amps. Watching a Soldier show was like hanging out at Guitar Center, it was awesome, total gear-fest. Rick is one of the sweetest guys too. Very humble, down to earth and easy to talk to. I went to most of their shows."

Castillo continued, "I remember we went to one of the more popular clubs right in the heart of San Francisco called Mabuhay Gardens on Broadway and asked if they would book a show with Soldier, Believer and Crossforce. The owner was like, 'Yeah right, like I'm gonna book a bunch of Christian Momma's boys that might get 10 people to the show.' The club took a chance and we packed that place with hundreds of people. After that the club owner would book us in prime slots and we'd pack it every time. We'd rock it so hard and I'd sweat buckets, the energy was through the roof."

With the passing of lead vocalist Tony Crider in 2002 (bass player Jeff Hudson passed away in 2009) it's questionable if he was aware of the impact his music had on the listeners. As Phil and I discussed their relationship he had this to say, "Folks said Tony and I had the Plant/Page or Tyler/Perry chemistry thing going. We were just always writing together and we fed off each other's creativity. Jeff Hudson would also write from time to time and he was really good. Tony was an incredibly talented musician. We recorded so much material together on cassettes that we never had enough time to work it all out with the band. I'd imagine those cassettes probably lie on the bottom of one of Tony's old dressers all these years later. His brain never stopped, which was probably his undoing. He got to the end way to fast. I would throw out some weird riff and groove and he could always pull out a killer melody with amazing lyrics. Most people only saw Tony play guitar and don't know that he was an accomplished piano player too. Some of my fonder memories were just hanging out at Tony's house and he'd get on the piano and play all these old gospel tunes, Bach

hymns, Elton John and such. I'd put my guitar down and just watch him play and sing for awhile. He was so good, I really miss him."

However, as many things do, they come to an end and in 1988 Phil left Crossforce. When asked why he had this to say, "I can't remember when but I left when Tony lost confidence in himself and probably with the band too. He was a great singer with his own sound but he never really believed it. He was disappointed that he didn't have a high alto voice like most of the singers of the 80's, he was a natural tenor. I loved his voice, plus it made us different from everybody else. Unfortunately, Tony wasn't buying it, very sad."

Sometime after Crossforce Tony and Phil reunited, albeit briefly, in a new band called Mercy. Mercy never had an official release for public consumption however with this Roxx release Bill was able to put together seven unreleased Mercy tracks as a special limited edition bonus disc. Phil had this to say about his brief reunion with Tony, "I thought Tony had worked out his confidence issues but after awhile he started struggling with personal issues and his musical direction kept shifting. Who knows, maybe musically I just couldn't keep up?"

When quizzed about his most memorable moments in Crossforce Phil added, "The Mabuhay Garden Shows. We played other bigger venues and to larger audiences but Mabuhay just had the vibe. Soldier would usually finish off the night, so after we played I'd just join in with the audience and push my way to the front, sweat some more and rock out. Soldier was fun and had a fierce sound, way too much fun!"

There were many shows Crossforce appeared at from Metal Mardi Gras in 1987 to their own HIS Festival appearance in 1988. Not to mention, Crossforce shared the Bay Area stage with Barren Cross, Whitecross, Guardian, Bloodgood and last but not least Deliverance (way back in 1987 before they were even signed!).

When discussing post Crossforce and Mercy music he had this to say, "I put the guitar down for a couple of years, reassessed what direction God wanted me to go. I cut off my hair, studied and got my securities (stock and bonds) license and went to work in the financial sector setting up pension accounts. I joined my father's company a couple of years later and moved to San Diego. I eventually started playing again and got in a band that would become Krush.

We put out a couple albums and toured some. We would play some really heavy stuff" [For this writer it's with great regret that I must admit I've never heard Krush, sigh. Can't win 'em all.]

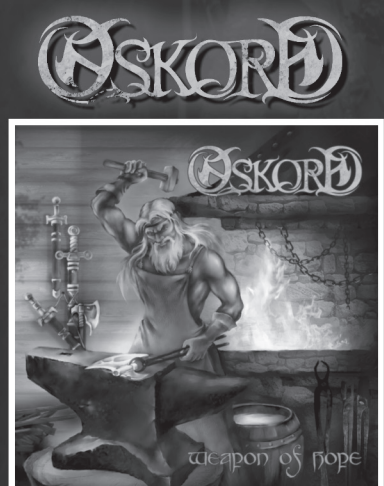
Our conversation continued as we conversed about what he's involved in currently on the musical side. "I moved to Nashville, TN seven years ago and play in Jessica Miller's Band. I also play with some local acts and on my church worship team. When I'm not scheduled to play worship I, along with my wife and kids, will visit some other churches. I get a kick seeing who's playing at some of the other churches around town. So many of the worship bands have professional musicians who get paid a lot of money to play but do it free for their churches. Even Kix Brooks (Brooks & Dunn) leads worship sometimes in his little church of 70 people. I like popping my head into Christ Community in Franklin from time to time to see Glen Pierce play. He's one of my favorite guitar players with a huge big act studio and touring resume and he just sits up there looking like he's half asleep and homeless, yet sounding amazing."

Hopefully you've gotten a little bit more insight into Crossforce through this piece. Phil had this to say in closing, "The Lord has opened up some opportunities for me in talk radio. I co-host a live call-in show on the weekends called One Nation Under God (onenationundergodradio.com) on Supertalk 99.7 WTN, which is the largest talk station in Nashville. We discuss politics and culture from a biblical perspective with the understanding that one's religion, or lack thereof, is the largest determiner one's politics. The show is top-rated in our time slot and the station is looking for opportunities to move us into weekday programming so I appreciate everyone's prayers for God's grace. I'm pretty much way over my head on the whole deal.

I'm also very appreciative of Roxx releasing old Crossforce material. The support and reaction is great. Like all musicians, I look back at that body of work and cringe at some of my playing (what was I thinking?) but it also confirms that Crossforce was special. We really had some great songs and special moments in there. Crossforce had a life and sound all to itself." *Rocking Til The Final Day* is available on Roxx Productions.

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FOLK METAL

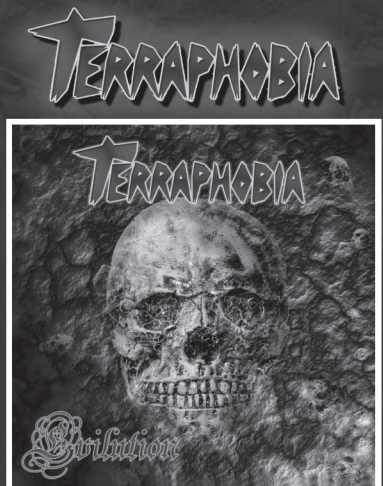


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ONE OF THE BUSIEST MUSICIAN/SINGER/SONGWRITERS WORKING TODAY, I AM SURPRISED **NEAL MORSE** FINDS TIME TO SLEEP. FIRST MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF THROUGH MANY GREAT RECORDINGS AT THE HELM OF SPOCK'S BEARD, AND EVEN FINDING TIME TO DO A COUPLE SOLO ROCK ALBUMS DURING THAT TIME. IN 1999 HE BECAME PART OF A "SUPER GROUP" WHEN HE TEAMED UP WITH DRUMMER MIKE PORTNOY (DREAM THEATER), GUITARIST ROINE STOLT (FLOWER KINGS) AND BASSIST PETE TREWAVAS (MARILLION) TO FORM THE MEGA-AMAZING PROG BAND, TRANSATLANTIC, RELEASING QUITE A BIT OF EXCELLENT STUDIO AND LIVE MATERIAL. THEN, IN 2002 HE LEFT BOTH BANDS TO PURSUE A SOLO CHRISTIAN MUSIC CAREER, AND IN 2003 RELEASED HIS FIRST CHRISTIAN ALBUM, *TESTIMONY*, WHICH TOLD HIS SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN A BIOGRAPHICAL TWO-DISC AMAZING MUSICAL EXPERIENCE. ALSO IN 2003, HE JOINED WITH MIKE PORTNOY, PAUL GILBERT AND MATT BISSETT TO DO A FEW SHOWS LATER RELEASED ON CD AND DVD AS YELLOW MATTER CUSTARD, A BEATLES TRIBUTE BAND. NEVER ONE TO SLOW DOWN, HE FOLLOWED THAT UP WITH A NEW CHRISTIAN SOLO ALBUM IN THE YEARS 2004, 2005, 2007, AND 2008. IN BETWEEN THOSE RELEASES, HE ALSO RECORDED AND RELEASED AT LEAST FIVE WORSHIP ALBUMS. IN LATE 2010 HE WENT INTO THE STUDIO WITH MIKE PORTNOY AND GUITARIST STEVE MORSE (DIXIE DREGS, KANSAS, DEEP PURPLE) TO RECORD AN ALBUM THAT IS CURRENTLY NAMELESS AND BEING SHOPPED AROUND TO LABELS.

and a Testimony, too

BY JEFF MCCORMACK



He is a driving force behind the Radiant Records label (radiantrecords.com), has a fan club that he edits and releases custom members-only CDs and DVDs through multiple times a year, is a husband and father, and yet somewhere in all of that found time to write a biography that came out this year also entitled *Testimony*, as well as read it himself for an audio book format. Along with it he released another two-disc collection of tunes in *Testimony 2*. I was thrilled to be able to catch up with Neal near the end of August for a few minutes to discuss some of these items:

JM: Neal, why is your material not more readily available or distributed in the Christian market?

Neal: I have tried, and have looked into that, but it just has never seemed to take hold. The Christian market doesn't seem to get the prog thing, so I am still in the same market as I was before. Like any market, it can be hard to break in to; I just leave it up to the Lord if that door ever opens.

What is up with this newer project with Portnoy and Steve Morse?

We finished that project up before I went out for the *Testimony 2 Tour* these past few months, and it is currently being shopped around to labels. Rather than being a Radiant Records release, there is a desire for that project to break out into other markets, since it is not really a prog album.

What are you working on presently?

I am currently working on finishing up the audio for the *Testimony 2* live release, which will be a three disc set, live from Los Angeles. Also, I am finishing up the audio for a new live CD/DVD release for Transatlantic, due to be released in October. After that, I am not sure what my next project will be, I am just take it day by day and praying to see. I have written most of a musical story about the life of Jesus. It is kind of a prog version of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, so that may be something for the future, but nothing is decided yet.

Transatlantic recently released a live CD/DVD set – how is this one going to be different? Any plans for a new studio album?

We've been touching base a bit about this new live release, but no discussion of a new studio album yet. The new live stuff is different footage from different nights than was released on the previous set. The audio stuff is from Manchester, the last night of the tour, and the video is from Tilburg. Those gigs were really good, and where well filmed, and we thought it would be a shame not to share it with people.

So, out of all of the projects you do, which is the one that most excites you?

Oh wow, that is a tough question man.

Obviously you love it all or you wouldn't do it, but is there any one of them that brings more pleasure to do?

(laughs) I really do enjoy it all. There aren't any of them that I feel less enthusiastic about. What I am most enthusiastic about is doing God's will. When I feel something is clearly what God wants me to do, then I am excited to do it, and that is what I have felt about everything I have done in the past eight years or so. I think I enjoy the solo stuff just a little bit more, because it is my comfort zone where I call all the shots, but I also love the collaborating. I just have to say it's all good.

Out of all your solo albums, does any one of them stand out or seem more popular or a bigger seller than the rest?

I would have to say *Sola Scriptura*. Probably because it is considered heaviest, and people tend to like heavy, I think.

So your next album will be a death metal album then?

(laughs) Who knows?!

On the *Testimony 2* release we hear a little collaboration with the Spock's Beard guys; any talk of recording or reunion shows in the future?

No there hasn't been any talk of anything like that. We did play some songs together at the High Voltage festival in London last month and there is some footage from that which will be bonus footage on the *Testimony 2* DVD coming out in November.

So, you have the new book, and just recently you finished recording an audio version. Tell us a bit about that whole process.

The audio book was much harder than I thought. It was not an easy task. You wouldn't think it would be that hard, but it was. I'd get in there and be lucky to get through a paragraph; I'd get to where I'd feel like I couldn't talk; I don't know what it was. It was just a problem with flubbing the words, the problem was trying to annunciate the words clearly enough for a lot of my fans where English is a second language. So I had to make sure my diction was clear, but not too clear to where it would sound goofy. And it is not so much about the words as it was about performance. I wanted the words to convey feeling and have a right sound to it. Plus, I put a lot of things in it that were off-the-cuff and not in the book. I would sing the lyrics rather than just read them, and other fun things like.

Any parting words of wisdom?

Always take your wallet with you on stage? (laughs)... I would just say as the Scripture says, "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." And wait upon the Lord. That is how I am living my life now, and it's great, I've never been happier.

HEAVEN'S
METAL



What | Orphaned Land | Says

ISRAEL'S ORPHANED LAND IS EASILY ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND ORIGINAL ACTS THE PROGRESSIVE METAL SCENE HAS ENCOUNTERED IN A LONG TIME. WITH ROOTS STRONGLY GROUNDED IN THE DEATH METAL GENRE – WHERE THEY STARTED ALMOST 20 YEARS AGO – THEY HAVE EVOLVED INTO A DYNAMIC MUSICAL FORCE; THEIR CAPTIVATING AND CINEMATIC MIDDLE EASTERN METAL REFRESHINGLY TRANSCENDS ANY ONE GENRE. CLEARLY, WHAT DREAM THEATER HAS BEEN TO NORTH AMERICA OR WHAT OPETH HAVE BECOME TO SCANDINAVIA, ORPHANED LAND IS TO THE MIDDLE EAST. *SIN KILLER*'S NORMAN LIMA (BRAZIL) RECENTLY HAD A CHANCE TO EXPLORE THE WORLD OF ORPHANED LAND WITH GUITARIST MATTI SVATIZKY, AND IN COLLABORATION WITH OUR BRETHERN IN BRAZIL, WE FELT THIS WAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE READERS OF *HEAVEN'S METAL* TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS AMAZING BAND.

"I choose to keep an open mind as much as I can and not focus only in one religion's traditions. I think that the spirit of life exists in all the beings in nature and that every being should be highly respected."

Let me introduce myself, this is Norman with the Brazilian Christian webzine called Sin Killer. Thank you for the time given to answer my questions.

Hi there, I'm Matti Svatizky, Orphaned Land's guitarist, and I'll be happy to answer your questions.

Any news you'd like to start telling about Orphaned Land?

There is always something that is happening. Right now we are working on our debut live DVD, which will be out this November. We have filmed it a few months ago in Tel Aviv and we are very excited towards its release. We are also having a full headline European tour next to the release.

What does the name Orphaned Land mean? It sounds so good to me.

At first the band was called Resurrection. It was a cool name that fit a typical death metal band, and that's what we tried to be in the early days. After a short while we decided to go in a different direction and decided that a name change is necessary. We found the phrase "Orphaned Land" inside lyrics of a famous Israeli singer and made up our minds that this could be a good name for us. I think that this name captures a lot of what the band is about. It is a kind of a paradox in a way, because the band sings about spiritual things – about God and man – and this name kind of leaves you with a melancholic atmosphere, like no one is watching and all that we do is in vain. The name is very abstract, it could mean different things to different people, and this is also one of the reasons we have chosen it.

You are on the road for almost 20 years. What kind of lessons do you guys learn from this?

20 years is indeed a long time in which we've been around. We get all kinds of reactions from people, usually good ones. We have some pretty hardcore fans who tattoo our logo and lyrics from our songs on their bodies. I think that it's great that people take us so seriously, because I think that in the end of the day our message is super positive, and the fact that people understand it and go such a long way with us only proves that there are good people out there who believe in positive things.

About the festivals you've played in ... Wacken Open-Air, Summer-Breeze, Hellfest and ProgPower ... some special highlight of the shows?

We have played in many festivals so far and in over 30 countries around the world. Each festival is great and cool in its own way. Of course, that you can learn a lot from each one, about the production, management, etc. ... a side which is very important in the show business, even for bands. We have played to crowds of over 20,000 people sometimes and it is always great getting the energies from this amount of people who come to listen to good music and have fun.

In your view, what differentiates Orphaned Land from other bands in the world? Just culture?

No, I don't think so. Israel is quite a Western country in its nature. It's a democracy, which is run in a very European sort of way. We could have done something which is a lot more conventional, like what we did in our early days, but we chose to do something less conventional, because we knew that in order to stand out you have to be very innovative. We chose to bring the ethnical side as a part of what we do also, because it was something new and exciting, and I bet that if other bands would do it at the time we would have found something else which would have been different in its way.

If you could boil down "the message" of your music into one theme, let's say Orphaned Land, what would that be?

I think that our main message is that people are really the same behind all the cultural masks and the colors of their skins. When people from different cultures listen to the same music it arouses in them feelings which are very much alike – both intellectually and spiritually. Our systems are very similar, there is over 99% of similarity between one person's and another's DNA structure and it's a shame that over this tiny 1% difference such bad things happen in the world. That's what we are here for, to remind people that all in all we are looking for the same things in this life, so why the hell waste it over unimportant things?

I think this question is new to you. Let's do it. I always read the news about the band in Christian websites. You know something about this scene [also known as "white metal"]? Accepted to play at a Christian festival?

I've heard the name before, but this is not exactly our style. Our music is very spiritual, but you can't associate it to one religion, even though that we are all Jewish in the band, and come from Israel. Our Middle Eastern sound is something that also drives it away of being strictly Christian. Of course, we respect everybody's beliefs and right to make any music they want and deliver their message in their way.

What religious background do you come from?

Like I said, we are all Jewish in the band. I myself come from quite a traditional family. My family celebrates the Jewish holidays and keeps some of the Jewish customs. I, however, choose not to strictly follow all the customs and rules. I choose to keep an open mind as much as I can and not focus only in one religion's traditions. I think that the spirit of life exists in all the beings in nature and that every being should be highly respected.

Last question. Who are your guitar heroes? And what band you have heard more lately?

There are many guitar heroes who have inspired me along the way. There are David Gilmour, Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, Eric Clapton, and of course the list goes on and on. Lately I went back to the old Pink Floyd stuff after giving it a rest for a few years. It is really a great band – if not the greatest. Gotta love 'em.

The second part of the last question (laughs). Let everyone know what's on your mind about any subject you like.

I think that every person is entitled to have his own thoughts and beliefs about the world. Our life's paths have led us to think like we do. Therefore, we should learn to respect anyone, especially if we believe that God's masterplan is in charge of every little thing that happens.

Thanks again. Stay strong and good.

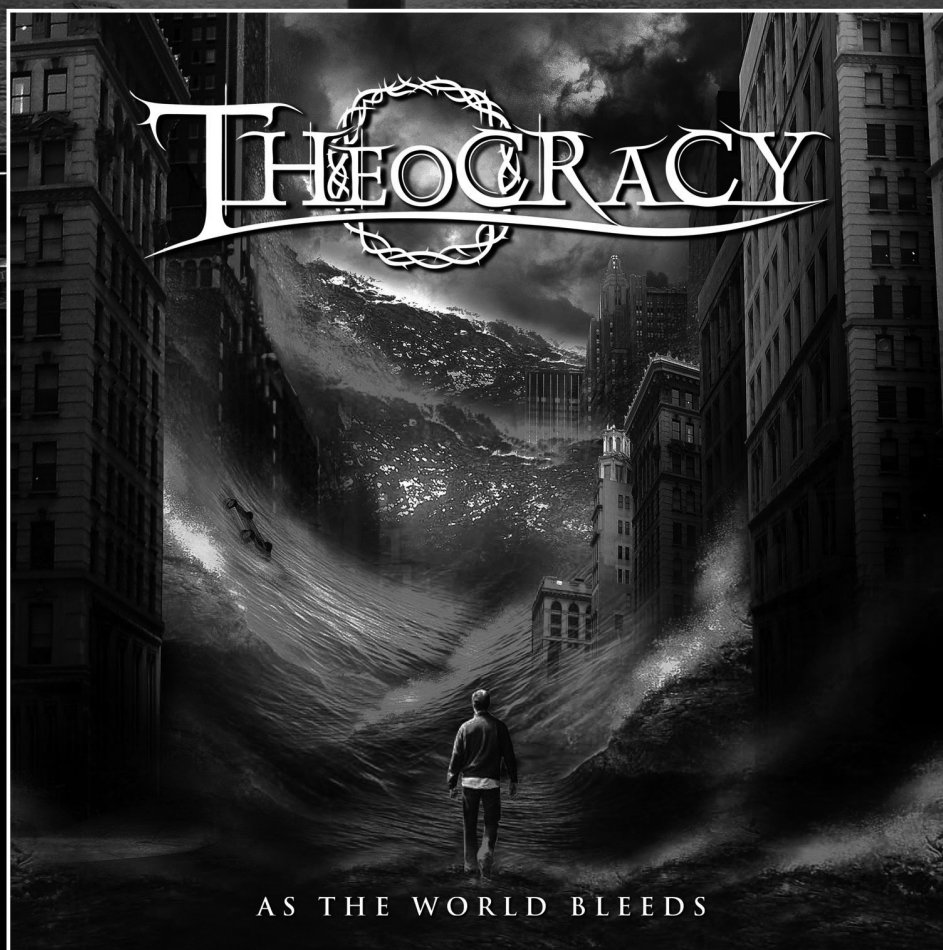
Thanks, man. You, too. Be well.

[Published courtesy sinkillerwebzine.blogspot.com]

HEAVENS
ROCKS



ULTERIUM RECORDS PROUDLY PRESENTS



THEOCRACY **AS THE WORLD BLEEDS**

Theocracy are finally here with their long-awaited third album entitled "As The World Bleeds"! This is definitely the strongest Theocracy effort so far, and includes ten tracks of the highest class! The album is mastered by Mika Jussila [Stratovarius, Nightwish, Children of Bodom] and the artwork is created by Felipe Machado Franco [Blind Guardian, Rhapsody of Fire, Iced Earth]. The album will also be available as a 12" double gatefold vinyl edition, strictly limited to 500 copies worldwide.

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ALBUM REVIEWS



JERUSALEM

SHE

She marks the welcome return of these hard hitting Swedes, with their first all new studio album since 1994's acclaimed *Prophet*.

It's the story of an unfaithful bride and unwavering love of her husband to bring redemption to her even in her sin. Musically, *She* picks up roughly where *Prophet* left off, in U2 style pop/rock territory, leaving largely behind the quasi-metal leanings of earlier material like "Plunder Hell." Ulf Christiansson's familiar voice carries the story, although the band as a trio now seems to limit the sound. There are some hard rocking numbers, like "Come On," tempered by slower moving songs like "She," but as always, Ulf has a poignant word for us in the inspired "Supernatural" – "Don't you know your God by now?" – that is the high mark of the album. Beautiful digipak packaging, but very difficult to find in the US. Check them out at jerusalem.se [Pierced Records] Chris Gatto



HOPE FOR THE DYING

DISSIMULATION

HFTD play the best kind of metal – by that I don't mean the style, but the type that takes a while to dig your teeth into, but

when you do it gets lodged in your brain and won't go away. Influences (and even subgenres) are all over the place – progressive to extreme, classic to modern, it's all here. But with one important difference – on *Dissimulation* this mix of influences really works to create a cohesive piece of art. [Facedown] Loyd Harp

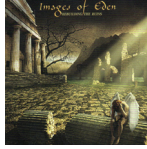


EDGE OF ETERNITY

S/T

Given the unfortunate lack of female-fronted Christian metal bands that stylistically compare to counterparts like Nightwish

and Epica, I was excited to hear this new offering from Edge of Eternity. Was it realistic to expect songwriting and production on par with the aforementioned? Not really, but I quickly realized that it's still a very solid to good album. The best track, "Unholy," starts off heavy, leading to the bridge with beautiful singing and keyboards, before kicking into a melodic and memorable chorus. This song is hopefully an example of great things to come from this very promising band. [Indie] Chris Beck



IMAGES OF EDEN

REBUILDING THE RUINS

It seems every time I devour an Images of Eden CD I feel as though I am peeking into principle songwriter Gordon

Tittsworth's personal spiritual journals. *Rebuilding the Ruins* is no exception, being a concept recording of spiritual and emotional growth through hard times. It seems every recording of theirs is a gigantic step up to a higher level in production, songwriting and maturity. IOE is one great treasure to find for those who love prog metal with an emotional side – a reflection on the works of Fates Warning, Queensryche and Iron Maiden. My favorite tunes are the dark and powerful "My Stigmata" with its pounding drum track and thrash style vocals and the musically aggressive, down and dirty title track. For a darker and more mature release, check out this third installment of this exceptionally talented band. [Nightmare] Mark Glunt

VARIOUS ARTISTS

CHRISTIAN PROGRESSIVE ROCK 4

This is the fourth CPR (Christian Progressive Rock) compilation from Righteous Sinner Records and features some of the best current faith-based prog rock bands. The track which stands out the most is Pursuit's "Judah." There is also a fine remix of Iona's "Let Your Glory Fall" which translates into a wonderful worship song. Others who appear in the collection are Visual Cliff, Gene Crout, Farpoint, Kinetic Element, KDB3, Supernal Endgame, Chicago's jazz fusion band Syzygy and Eric Parker (former vocalist for Glass Hammer). The production is above par for all the tracks. This collection is well worth the purchase and a great way to get exposure to some of the finest art rock in Christendom. [Righteous Sinner] Mark Glunt



IRONWILL

UNTURNED

You've got to have either a lot of courage or a lot of arrogance to call the lead off track of your debut full-length "Visionaries."

And yet, *Unturned* might possibly live up to that. Ironwill strike first and strike hard and cause me to miss the days when hardcore was less about breakdowns and girlie haircuts and more about passion, intensity, urgency, ferocity and even (gasp!) musicianship. But

this isn't a revivalist band either. Much like stalwarts Stretch Armstrong, Strongarm, Falling Cycle, etc. Ironwill combines the best of past, present and future and creates a work of art that will be worth listening to again when the current flavour-of-the-month has faded. Simultaneously melodic, metallic and progressive (instrumental track "Sri Lanka" wouldn't be out of place with label mates The Blue Letter), with just a few breakdowns (do they need them?), Blood & Ink scores again. [Blood & Ink] Loyd Harp

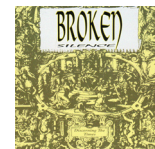


ONWARD TO OLYMPUS

THE WAR WITHIN

Their sophomore effort intriguingly starts off literally where *This World is Not My Home* finished – that

haunting melodic guitar riff. While similarities to their debut are certainly present, *War* is slightly more stripped-down, less technical, perhaps more focused as a result. It's still brutally heavy with touches of the melodic, with lots of spiritual content in the lyric, and enough of thrashtastic riffs to keep more traditional metalheads interested. [Facedown] Loyd Harp



BROKEN SILENCE

DISCERNING THE TIMES

Hawaii's Broken Silence was another one of those bands from the late 80's that came a bit too late to the scene to

make an impact. This well-produced (David Zaffiro) and well-crafted music never scored the band a record deal, probably because in the 90's no one was signing this brand of melodic metal. Sharing much in common with Stryper (primarily singer Daniel Ysaïs) and Holy Soldier – and Winger and Whitesnake for that matter – these guys didn't break any new ground, but the songs sound good, solid ... very listenable. With the exception of the ballad "If I Love" – where the singer sounds really awkward and the lyrics get a bit cheesy ("If I love I can sail across the ocean blue, make a better world for me and you") – most of the songs rock with conviction. [Retroactive] Jonathan Swank



SAVIOUR MACHINE

LEGEND III:II

Well, here it is ... one of the most controversial releases in the history of our scene – and I'm not talking about the lyrics.

As many are already aware, this release is not sanctioned by Eric Clayton. It's an amalgam of recorded material – previously unreleased on CD format – from the *Legend III* sessions. Musically, the concepts and melodies are both beautiful and haunting, and mostly consistent with what we've heard up to this point in the *Legend* series. But from a purely objective standpoint this feels disjointed, the full instrumentation is absent on most tracks – where are all of the guitars and acoustic drums ... and those huge choral elements? Long, silent breaks between tracks disrupt the flow unlike the previous releases where songs melded seamlessly together ... and the last few tracks really drag. Production quality is okay, but not at the same level as the other *Legend* discs – sounds like good quality demo material. Oddly, there are no liner notes, lyrics or credits. Controversy aside, from a purely musical standpoint use caution; while clearly not as horrible as purported, this pales in comparison to the other *Legend* releases, not surprising when you consider the circumstances under which it was released. In my opinion, sadly both label and artist lose on this one. [Massacre] Jonathan Swank

(See saviourmachine.com for Eric's full response to this release and details about his plans to re-record *Legend Part III*. See lethalconflict.wordpress.com/tag/saviour-machine for a full Massacre Records statement)

SAVIOUR MACHINE

1990 DEMO 20TH ANNIVERSARY LTD EDITION

In stark contrast to the controversial *Legend III:II* from Massacre, this is an official Eric Clayton sanctioned release. Remixed from the original 1990 analog recordings, these songs sound better than ever. Having not listened to this demo in over a decade, the songs sound fresh, revitalized – the sound quality superior to the original version. This mixture of songs (many of which later showed up on *SMI*) is a testimony to both the band's talent and their propensity to write dark, brooding songs with metaphorical lyrics. Interestingly, many of these early songs had a fast pace and a much more straightforward exegesis. Of course, "The Revelation" is the epic 5-part apocalyptic song that would give

fans a taste of where Saviour Machine would eventually focus their endeavors. The lengthy instrumental "Church of the Vatican Slaves," included here, was not on the original demo release. Essential for dedicated fans, Eric also released a *Limited Signature Edition* package which includes the CD plus a vinyl picture disc. [Paradox/Retroactive] Jonathan Swank

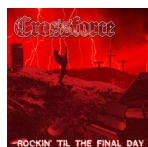


A HILL TO DIE UPON

OMENS

"I am the black space between the stars, I am the darkness that can be felt." It is this kind of writing that made us rave about

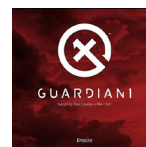
A Hill to Die Upon's debut, calling them the best new extreme metal band out there, because clearly they are delivering everything dark and heavy we love about metal. So now we come to the much awaited sequel. Did they do it? Did this death/black metal hybrid, corpse painted Midwest band surpass album #1? The answer, I have to say, is no. This is a brilliant album and there is much to love about it, but the doomy feel this time around seems to dull the brilliance sometimes, making *Omens* a point below *Infinite*. That said, they are the best band doing this style today. Shades of my all-time favorite death metal band Bolt Thrower, as well as the holy black assault on our ancient enemy in "Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down," counterpoint the beauty shown in "Nehushtan" and the sleeper track. Pick this up! [Bombworks] Chris Gatto



CROSSFORCE

ROCKIN' TIL THE FINAL DAY

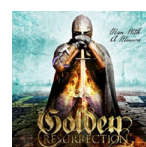
One of the most overlooked bands of the mid 80's has finally been brought to CD. The boys had a classic metal style led by Tony's incredible vocals, having great power and enough grit to make for a great metal singer. The CD contains not only their awesome 1986 demo, remastered for improved sound, but also an unreleased 1987 live demo that was used to shop for a deal with Frontline records. For me, this brought back memories of the many listens and almost wearing out the original cassette. If you are new to the band, like classic 80's better than average demo quality releases, you need this one. This is one of those bands that should have been a major name in the metal world of the day. [Roxx] Jeff McCormack



GUARDIAN1

EMPIRE

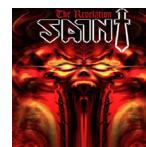
Original Guardian vocalist/guitarist Paul Cawley and drummer Rikk Hart have resurfaced in the music world under the name Guardian1, with a new 3 song EP digital download. Very melodic harmonies, with a sound reminiscent of the direction of their First Watch album, but with a slightly grittier, mildly modern rock guitar feel to it, especially noticeable in songs like "Stand Up." No real new ground broken, but it is nice to hear these two making music again and I think it shows promise, making me look forward to what they bring us next. [G1 Records] Jeff McCormack



GOLDEN RESURRECTION

MAN WITH A MISSION

Release number two finds this Swedish melodic metal powerhouse band featuring the vocals of Christian Liljegen (Narnia, Divine Glory) and the sweet guitar and vocal work of Tommy ReinXeed (ReinXeed) back with another excellent slab of what they do best. Nothing "new" sound wise, but is there really a need when they already sound this good? Lyrics are just as bold, but I find them a bit more mature this time around, with less of a cliché feel to them. A fine sophomore release that raises the bar a bit higher. The digital download version has two bonus cover tunes, Kansas' "Point of No Return" and Gary Moore "The End of the World," both well worth the purchase. [Liljegen] Jeff McCormack



SAINT

THE REVELATION

This is what happens when you take an already great album, and remix it and make it better? Saint's 2006 release, *The Mark*, was recently taken back in the studio and remixed to produce the new digital download album *The Revelation*. I liked the original, but this one is so much better I think. The overall sound is cleaner, the guitars are not as muddy (odd how you don't always notice something is muddy until you hear them not-muddy), and it just sounds grittier and more powerful throughout. If you liked the original, check out this new edition – it is well worth it. [Armor] Jeff McCormack

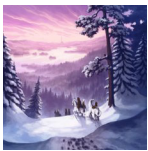
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VISION

STREET FIGHTER

I was a huge fan of this Southern Rock supergroup and had the privilege of seeing them live (opening for Larry Norman on the Stop This Flight Tour), but I had no clue that the band had a third album buried under red tape from way back in the mid-'80s. It's a good thing, because I might have killed to get ahold of it. Turns out the anticipation exceeds the quality, as these songs are good but steeped in '80s production and light, airy strummed guitars with way too little distortion and keyboards, keyboards and more keyboards. [Born Twice] Doug Van Pelt



THE WINTER TREE

S/T

Composer/multi-instrumentalist Andrew Laitres (a.k.a. Andrew Robinson) along with Mark (guitars) and Deb (keyboards) Bond form the band The Winter Tree, which is a reworking of the magnificent prog rock band MAGUS. Here we have a collection of 11 ethereal eclectic prog rock tunes. In the way they presents its material I'm reminded of Jeff Johnson's work. There are mellow, airy rock tunes as well as techno expressions which touch in the edge of industrial here. The opening song, "Babylon," has Middle Eastern influence. In the last few years Laitres' faith has played a more visible role in his art, most noticeable with titles like "Guardian Angel," "Voices From a Lost Age" and "The Adventures of Prince Caspian." If you are a fan of prog rock, don't let this one slip by you. [ProgRock] Mark Glunt

LEN SPINELLI

HAUNTS OF JACKALS

Former Xd Out drummer ventures forward on his third solo release. Prog is the magic word for this and all his solo releases. The much darker *Haunts of Jackals* steps up the sonic quality and shows more depth in songwriting. Spinelli & co. create a much heavier recording touching upon serious prog metal with a few art rock tunes. The prog rock tunes are OK, very similar to his previous work, but the real magic is in the metal – heavy guitars along with strong, layered vocals giving way to dark emotion. One of the highlights is the moody "Architects of the Curse," which would fit on any of the Kerry Livgren recordings. The only complaint I have about this collection is the lack of continuity from song to song, otherwise *Haunts of Jackals* would be a fairly mature release. [Independent] Mark Glunt



PROPHET AZAL

ELIJAH RETURNS

Like one who eats locust and wild honey while screaming in the wilderness "Repent! The end is near!" comes the hard, gritty blues rock Prophet AZAL (aka Gypsy Carns). No one plays slide guitar like this eccentric wildman. The collection is worth picking up just for that. Ever wonder where the no compromising Gospel performers have gone? I think all their spirits have converged on the Prophet. Eleven tunes speaking out to repent of our selfish, self-centered American lifestyle. Songs include "Change Coming Down," "Fifth Trumpet Bloww," "I AM Protects Me" and "Am I Immortal" This pastor (reviewer) is particularly challenged by "Wells Without Water" speaking for pastors to stand up and preach the Gospel rather than the typical feel-good jive. *Elijah Returns* is not for everyone, but for those it is they will consider it honey to their lips. [Trailer Trash] Mark Glunt



RED FIST REVOLUTION

THE FALL OF GOLIATH

¡Viva la Revolución! Coming straight from the belly of Marx is this timely artistic concept recording from former vocalist of Conspiracy of Thought Ben Stewart. Devan and Bassanoo lead guitarist from COT joins Stewart on this energetic post punk venture adding some progressive elements to the music. All the songs here are quite memorable. The recording champions the plight of a middle class laborer dealing with the oppression of corporate business and excessive Capitalism. But the twist from Marx, comes a spiritual awakening and refocus of the greater promise land – the New Jerusalem. The songs deal with issues of corporate slavery, greed and want, armament and end with a wonderful worship song. *The Fall of Goliath* is one of the most interesting works of art coming across my desk this year. Be sure to Google the RFR website for video companions. [Youngside] Mark Glunt



THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

HEAVY METAL QUIET?!?

In Philipians Chapter 4 V.7 it states: "And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." This is a scripture I pray over my wife Kate & son Leighton every night before they go to bed. This Peace that passes all understanding is something I have had to rely on a lot these past 15 years since cancer diagnosis.

Back in 1994 I was under so much stress, mainly inflicted by the pressures & expectations of others. My Mortification contact with FMG/ Intense Records was taking its toll. To record a world-class Jesus metal album every year is a big ask & is the reason many bands on the label decreased in quality of songwriting. Plus, in order to survive financially in metal ministry and support other similar missionaries with no outlet, I started Rowe Productions as a mission business. Kinda like Paul, who wrote the amazing words above, was a tent maker to support his mission.

I wrote the song "Monks Of The High Lord" at the time as a reflection on the parallel between being so busy working for God and yet we must find time to spend WITH God. Life was frantic & between recording, touring & running a record label I started to burn out. See, I did not take my own advise that I had written in the song! It took rock bottom for me to actually "be still & know that He is God."



I remember vividly sitting on my sofa in April 1997 so close to death that I could not do anything. If I ate I vomited & walking to the bathroom was a massive effort. I did not even have the energy to pray. Then suddenly I was within that grinding silence I had written about. That glorious peace of just being with WITH God in the silence. We were just "there" together and for the first time in 15 years I actually heard birds singing in the trees. God did not give me cancer, but He did get me to a point where I had actually stopped and He just ministered to me through all the pain and gave me peace!

Right now I am finding the need to stop, sit, reflect, be quiet & simply know God's peace. It is often insane what the world throws at you when you play mission metal. The entire new digital music age, YouTube, multiple Facebook Pages, MySpace, Reverbnation, websites & forums where "christians" express truckloads of negativism towards those in metal ministry? Really those forums should be for prayer & encouragement! So I just said to God a month ago: "Enough, I am resting in You," & if people get mad at me because I am not answering their e- mail or post I just need to let that be that other person's problem.

In the old days music ministry was very straight-forward. But reflecting on the stress levels back then taking away my peace, the stress levels have just intensified with the Net. Is there any escape!?!? The answer is yes! Be still & know that He is God & He is good no matter what happens. I would rather have God's peace & direction than waste time reading some negative metal forum or starting a new Facebook page for no other reason than to try & do God's work for Him. Be still & follow the priorities God is leading you into. Better than that dying of cancer stress! Slow & steady wins the race!!!



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HM JUST WENT OUT OF PRINT. WHAT'S NEXT?

Wow, it's really been an interesting time. *HM Magazine* has been clobbering me, putting me in a mountain of debt and not paying me a regular salary. Something's obviously broken with that business model. Besides seeking the Lord for direction, working my butt off to turn the thing around, I started to see some change, but not enough. I did some math and figured I needed to make X-amount and set that reasonable goal as the litmus test and fleece. We came up short and so *HM* is going out of print (but staying digital online, like it has been for the better part of five years). Will *Heaven's Metal Fanzine* be next? As it stands now, I think this fanzine can keep going, as it's breaking even. No one on our staff is getting paid for *Heaven's Metal*. We're covering the printing and postage with the ads and subscriptions sold. It'd probably be a lot easier on us all if we did go digital, so I can't promise that this'll be around forever. If it does go out of print, we'll work even harder to provide great content (and maybe, like with *HM*, we'll go monthly). This isn't the best, most exciting news to share, but it's what we're dealing with. So, pray with us and now (more than ever) connect with us via email, internet, facebook, podcast, etc. [heavensmetalpodcast.podomatic.com, hmmagazine.com, heavensmetal] And, stay tuned, because I'm looking into a *Heaven's Metal Fanzine* app version.

Doug Van Pelt



HEAVEN'S METAL FANZINE NOV/DEC 2011 ISSUE #89

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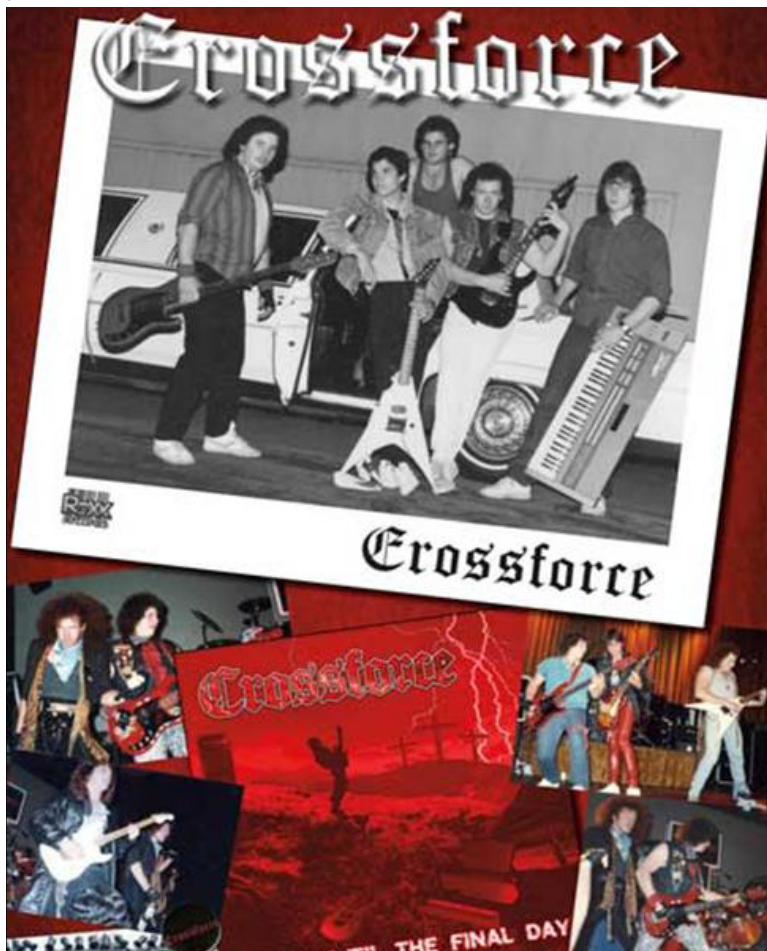
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